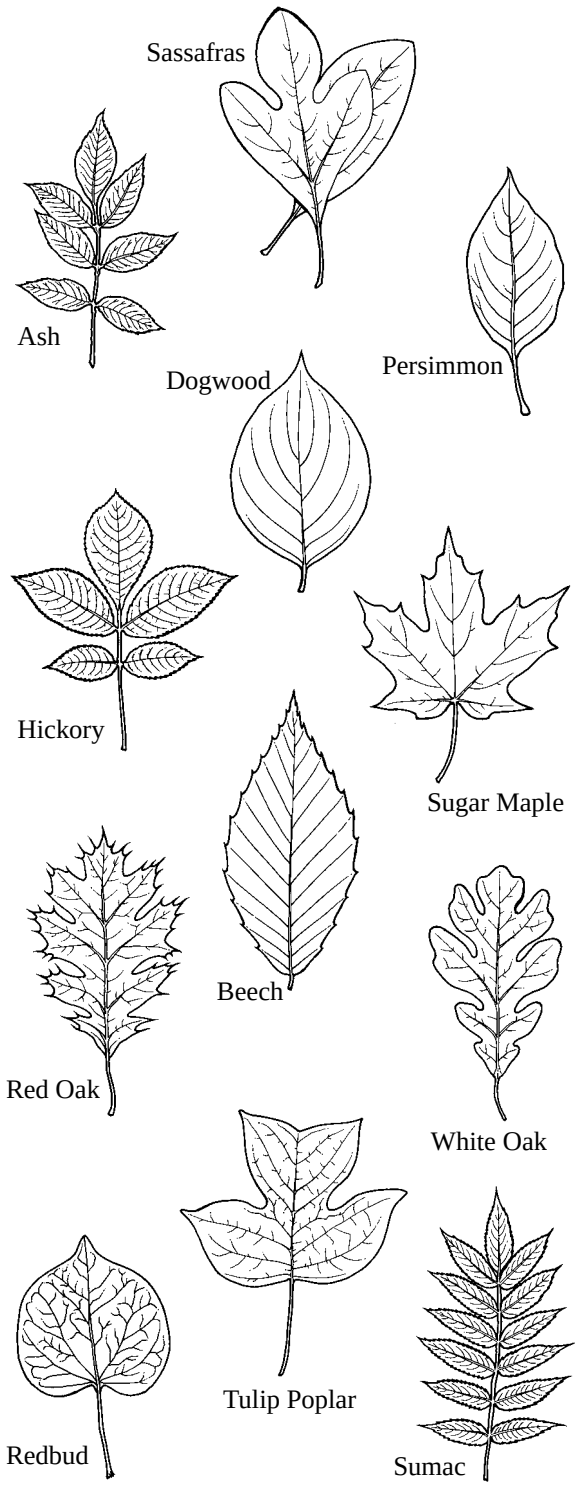
How to distinguish the different broad leaf trees by coloration:

*	American Elm	*Yellow*
*	Ash	*Yellow to Dark Purple*
	Aspen	*Yellow*
*	Basswood	*Yellow*
	Beech	*Clear Yellow*
	Birch	*Light Orange to Yellow*
	Black Locust	*Yellow*
	Black Oak	*Dull Red to Orange-Brown*
	Black Gum	*Bright Scarlet*
	Box Elder	*Bright Yellow*
	Butternut	*Bright Yellow*
	Cherry	*Yellow*
	Cottonwood	*Yellow*
*	Dogwood	*Crimson*
	Hawthorn	*Brilliant varying Colors and fruit*
	Hazelnut	*Brownish Yellow*
*	Hickory	*Dull Yellow*
	Honey Locust	*Light Yellow*
	Mountain Ash	*Bright, Clear Yellow, Red Berries, Prune Purple Leaves*
	Mulberry	*Yellow*
	Persimmon	*Light Yellow*
	Poplar	*Yellow Green and Golden Yellow*
	Red Maple	*Bright Scarlet and Orange*
*	Red Oak	*Dark Rusty Red*
*	Redbud	*Bright Yellow*
*	Sassafras	*Blood Orange*
	Scarlet Oak	*Brilliant Scarlet*
	Shad Bush	*Bright Clear Yellow*
	Silver Maple	*Pale Yellow*
	Striped Maple	*Pale Yellow*
*	Sugar Maple	*Bright Yellow to Orange & Scarlet*
*	Sumac	*Brilliant Red*
	Sweetgum	*Flaming Crimson to Purple Red*
	Sycamore	*Yellow to Brown*
*	Tulip Tree	*Bright Yellow*
	Tupelo	*Flaming Scarlet*
	Walnut	*Dull Yellow to Light Brown*
*	White Oak	*Flaming Scarlet*
	Witch Hazel	*Bright Yellow-Orange*

** illustration of leaf on back panel*



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DNR
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks and Reservoirs
Interpretive Services

Catching & Keeping Fall Colors

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COLORFUL PLANTS FASCINATE EVERYONE…

A professor of Anthropology at Columbia University was doing a study of Neanderthal Man remains in Iraq. It is customary in these studies to examine the surrounding soils to determine what plants were in the area and how these prehistoric people may have used them. In this study, a paleobotanist (person who studies fossil plants) found the pollen grains from at least *eight* kinds of flowers – mostly small, brightly colored varieties.

It seems amazing that these early, primitive people, with no civilization, had the interest to go out and collect pretty flowers and place them in the graves of fellow Neanderthals.

Today, this interest in colorful flowers and leaves certainly continues. As autumn arrives, we see the beautiful array of yellows, golds, oranges, reds, and maroons on trees and shrubs, and we see the last of the flowering plants in our gardens, fields, and woodlots. It is at this time of year, that many of us feel sad because we know it will be months before we see these colors again. There are ways, however, that we can catch and keep some of these colors. The methods are numerous and most are very simple and low cost – and all are certainly more advanced than what the Neanderthals started 60,000 years ago.

Trees and Shrubs

Holding the color pigments in leaves is often difficult once they lose their life support system and begin to dry out. Most methods will keep the colors for a season or two before they begin to fade or darken. There are ways, however, that allow us to keep for a time, that autumn aura of color.

Pressing

Leaf and plant presses can be as simple as a large book or old catalog, or as complex as a wood press with clamps. In most cases, layers of newspaper and cardboard, weighted down by something heavy will suffice. Use regular newsprint, not slick magazines that do not absorb moisture.

Single Leaves – Single leaves are easily pressed between pages in a book, but scrap paper or newspaper should be placed around leaves to prevent staining the pages.

Leaves on Branches- Branches of leaves can be pressed if the branches are not too large and if they are gathered before the leaves become too dry or wilted. Place the branch on five layers of newspaper and cover with five more layers of paper and one layer of hard cardboard. Continue making this "sandwich" and top it off with a piece of wood and a heavy weight. Store in a dark, dry area for 1 –5 weeks, depending on the amount you are drying and their condition.

Once the leaves are dry, they can be glued or taped to white sheets of paper. They can be sprayed with clear finish available at craft or hardware stores,or slid into plastic page protectors made for 3-ring binders.

Ironing

Place leaves between two pieces of waxed paper and with a warm (NOT HOT) iron gently iron until the wax paper sticks together. A hot iron will melt the wax paper.

Contact Paper

Place leaves between two pieces of clear contact paper. It helps to dry the leaves beforehand, by pressing, so that mold does not develop between the contact paper. With some creativity, you can make notebook paper, bookmarks, or simple displays suitable for framing.

Foil

Place a piece of aluminum foil over the leaf, bottom of the leaf up, and rub hard with a coin. Traces of the leave shape and veins should appear and the leaves may be cut and glued to paper.

Rubbings

Place a piece of clean white paper over the leaf and rub with charcoal or chalk. Face the bottom of the leaf up to get a better definition of the veins. Different colored chalk will give more the autumn effect. Again, they can be cut and pasted.

Flowers

Pressing

Flowers can also be pressed. Those that do well are lobelia, campanula, speedwell, pansies, cosmos, flax and wild geranium. Also some "weeds" such as Queen Anne's lace, sweet clover, and goldenrod press nicely. Pick them in mid morning to early afternoon when dry and at peak bloom. Press as you would leaves, for 2 to 3 weeks, With a couple of dabs of white glue arrange them on construction paper or note cards and then cover with clear contact paper.

Pounding out the Colors!

As crazy as it sounds, you can transfer some colors (and flower shapes) to t-shirts, aprons, placemats, wall hangings, and paper by pounding them out! Pick flowers the same as you would for pressing. Place them on your cloth or paper, cover with plastic wrap, and then tap entire bloom with a hammer. The juices will stain the material below. Some transferred colors differ from the actual flower's color, making some creations a real surprise! Experiment and try ferns and leaves as well. Prepare paper pounding as note cards. On fabric, let the juices dry for 48 hours, then soak it for 10 minutes in a salt water solution of $^1/_2$ cup of canning salt to $^1/_2$ gallon of water. Let air-dry.

Air Drying

Air-drying is the easiest method and costs nothing to do; however, not all plants lend themselves to this method. Those types that do air dry well are: mist flower, butterfly weed, cattails, yarrow, delphinium, goldenrod, and strawflowers.

Pick the flowers while in their prime and dry in a room of low humidity and good ventilation. A darkened, dry room is best since light fades colors. Some plants dry well right side up, while others do best upside down.

Imbedding

Imbedding flowers in a solid medium is the best method to preserve form and color. The principle is simple – the moisture from the flower is transferred to the solid medium, leaving a dry, preserved flower. Many mediums have been used. A few of them are: alum, alum and borax, boric acid, bread flour, chalk, cornstarch, cornmeal, Plaster of Paris, potato flour, sand, baking soda, and talcum powder. Even kitty litter has been used!

The factors that are desired in a solid medium are dry particles capable of absorbing moisture, smooth, light particles that won't damage petals, small particles that can touch a greater surface area, and particles that can be dried and reused.

Sand – Sand is the cheapest, but is rough, heavy, and does not dry well once wet.

Borax and Cornmeal – These two mediums, alone or mixed half and half, give better results than sand, but tend to cake when wet. They are still inexpensive and easy to use.

Silica Gel – Silica gel (available at craft and florist shops) is relatively expensive, but gives the best results and can be used over and over. Commercial gel contains dark blue crystals of cobalt salt, which turns light blue and then pink when the gel becomes moist. When this happens, simply place the silica gel in a 200-degree oven for one hour and the salt returns to dark blue and the mixture is ready to use again.

Plants should be picked in their prime and early in the morning once the dew is dry. Place the flower on one inch of gel and slowly sift the reminder over. Queen Anne's Lace and daisies retain their form well when placed upside down. Continue to slowly sift until the flowers are covered by 1/4 inch of gel.

Usually 2 to 8 days in silica gel are sufficient, but all plants vary, so experiment. When removing the plants, be gentle. Remember, they are more delicate now.

It is best to store your preserved flowers in a closed jar with a tablespoon of gel on the bottom. When enough are preserved, you can use florist wire and green tape to reconstruct the plants and make an arrangement that is sure to add warmth and beauty to your home during the long, cold winter months.